

A  
SERMON 2

Preached at the  
ASSIZES  
AT  
HERTFORD,

JULY viii. 1689.

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By JOHN STRYPE, M. A.  
Vicar of Low-Leyton in Essex.

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IMPRIMATUR,

Julii 22. 1689.

C. ALSTON.

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LONDON,

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SERMON

Preached at the

ASSIZES

AT

HERTFORD

JULY VIII 1689

BY JOHN STURGEON, M.A.

Vicar of Long-Python in Essex.

IMPRINTED

WILLIAMSON

AT THE

Printed by J. Sturges, at the Press of the  
in St. Paul's Church-yard, LONDON.

To the Right Worshipful

Richard Hutchinson, Esq;

HIGH SHERIFF of the County of

HERTFORD.

SIR,

I Acknowledge your Satisfaction to me, that this  
plain SERMON, preached at the late  
Assizes, found such a general good Acceptation  
both from the Judges and Gentry, inasmuch, that  
many of them put you upon obliging me to make it  
publick. But it added much to the satisfaction, that  
the subject matter of the Discourse, was so well ap-  
proved by so great a Body of Honour and Quality,  
as they appeared. Nor does it a little tend to the Re-  
putation of that County, that the Magistrates and Gen-  
try thereof allow so well of Discourses of this nature,  
shewing hereby their True Affection to the Protestant  
Religion, and to Christian Peace and Love, and how  
sensible they are of the singular Mercies and Delive-  
rances vouchsafed by God to this Nation, both in  
former times, and of late especially.

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

Sir, You have the honour to be reserved for the First Sheriff of Hertfordshire, under the Auspicious Reign of KING WILLIAM and QUEEN MARY. And it was your Happiness, as well as your Honour, that you were laid aside from serving that Office the last Year, after you were pricked and published in the Gazette, in the List of the High Sheriffs, as being judged, no doubt, too good an Englishman, and too true a Protestant, to serve the Turn that was then driving on.

I have, you see, in compliance with your desire, exposed what I preached to publick view, praying God it may be of some benefit to you, and all others, that shall take the pains to read it, for the promoting of Christian Wisdom and Sobriety; and then I have my end. I am,

SIR,

Your very much obliged

Humble Servant,

JOHN STURGE.



Office indeed is as Weighty, as 'tis Honour-  
able, to distribute Justice, to see good Laws  
well executed, to right oppressed Innocence,  
to maintain the King's Peace, and to preserve  
Peace; a Great and Divine Employment. But  
where there be Principles of Loyalty, and a  
Love of Justice planted in the mind, and  
far better Motives than the Lust of Riches can  
be: And I am persuaded I have Men enriched  
with such Endowments to be my Auditors at  
this Time.

**SERMON**  
**Preached at the**  
**Alizes at Hertford.**

**JULY VIII. 1689.**

That I may not be thought to misjudge  
your Honours or Abilities, Right Honourable

**SAM. xii. vii.**  
*Now therefore stand still, that I may  
reason with you before the Lord, of  
all the righteous Acts of the Lord,  
which he did to you and to your Fathers.*

**I** Come not here to instruct Judges, nor  
to teach Magistrates their Duty. As this  
would not become me to do, so neither  
I presume, do they need it; whose  
great Wisdom And Gravity is able to direct them  
in the Businesses that lie before them. Their  
Office

Office indeed is as Weighty, as 'tis Honourable, to distribute Justice, to see good Laws well executed, to right oppressed Innocence, to bring Wickedness to Shame; in a Word, to maintain the King's Peace, and the Churches Peace; a Great and Divine Employment. But where there be Principles of Loyalty, and a Love of Justice planted in the mind, accompanied with Piety, a good and sound Judgment, and many Years Experience; these are far better Monitors than the best Preachers can be: And I am persuaded I have Men enriched with such Endowments to be my Auditors at this Time.

That I may not therefore seem to misdoubt your Integrity or Abilities, Right Honourable and Right Worshipful, I now expose my self to the Censure of too much Assurance and Presumption; and yet that I may speak in some proportion to this present occasion, I have chosen those Words, which are part of the Charge of a great Judge in Israel, of whom the Scripture gives this Character; *That he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.* And so you see the Words may be suitable in respect of the Person that spake them. And they were delivered at a very great and solemn Conventi-

on of People, as yours now is; and so they are suitable in regard of the Auditory, that heard them: And the Matter of them, being a serious Exhortation to reflect upon God's Goodness, and their own Ingratitude, can neither now, nor at any time else, be unsuitable for Ministers to preach, nor Christians to hear.

Here, then, we have Samuel, the Judge, beginning his Charge, *Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord of all the righteous Acts of the Lord, which he did to you and to your fathers.* The Word, which we translate, *Let me reason with you*, is a Law-Term among the Hebrews, & signifies, *To plead and contend in Judgment for some wrong done*: And is as much as if he should have said, *Let me plead on God's side against you.* A good Judge is alwaies an Advocate on God's behalf, and zealous in his Cause. *Israel had wronged God, dealt unjustly with him.* How so? By sinning against him: For every Sin is an Injury done to God. Samuel now stands, and takes God's Part against them, by shewing them how gracious God had been to them, and how well he had deserved at their Hands, by his Mercies and Favours, expressed towards them; for so the Word, which we render *Righteous Acts*, often signifies: And by shewing them withal, how  
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illy they had required the Lord, disobeyed his Commandments, and rebelled against their Heavenly King.

And that his Expostulation with them, from the Topic of God's Goodness, might make the deeper impression upon them, he descends in the following Verses to enumerate the Righteous Acts of God towards them: *When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your Fathers cried unto the Lord, then the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your Fathers out of Egypt. So that their Escape out of Egypt was one of these Righteous, or Merciful, Acts of God to them.*

Ver. 8.

And then it follows, *And made them dwell in this place. This place; that is, The Land of Canaan, where they now were. That was another of these eminent Favours, or Righteous Acts of the Lord.*

Ver. 9.

*And when they forgot the Lord, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, Captain of the Host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the King of Moab; and they fought against them.*

Ver. 10.

Ver. 11.

*And they cried unto the Lord, &c. And the Lord sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your Enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe. They had Enemies, it seems, round about them, that ploried and combined to destroy them;*

But

but GOD alwaies interposed for their safety: This is a Third Mercy of GOD vouchsafed them.

And upon these three signal Manifestations of GOD's Goodness to them, the Prophet Samuel grounds his reasoning with them: For indeed they were Favours of that nature, that the Jews could not think of them, but they must needs have been touched with a quick sense of the Distinguishing Love of GOD to them, and under what mighty Obligations they were to Him; as namely, to review them again,

I. That GOD had brought them away from Egypt; where they were a poor, miserable, oppressed People, under intolerable Slavery, crouching to an insulting proud Tyrant, who laid unconscionable Tasks and Burthens of hard Labour upon them. *Their Task* Ex. 1. 14. *masters, saith the Scripture, made their Lives bitter with hard bondage in Mortar and in Brick and in all manner of service in the Field. all their* Ch. 2. 23. *service, wherewith they made them to serve, was with rigor.* Infomuch, that it is said, *They sighed and groaned, by reason of their bondage.* From all this Severity and Anguish did their gracious GOD

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in due time give them an eminent and famous Freedom.

II. Another of God's Righteous Acts towards them, was the planting them in the Land of *Canaan*; where they were not only free from the former Servitude, but lived plentifully and prosperously. A Land therefore it is described to be, *flowing with Milk and Honey*, fruitful, and yielding all things for their service, use, and delight. And here they lived under their own Laws, in a wise and well-constituted Government, having the true, standing, divine Service of God settled among them. Oh, what a blessed Change was this to them, to exchange *Egypt* for *Canaan*, the unmerciful Impositions of a Tyrannical Prince, for the sweet and good Laws of their Gracious and Heavenly King.

III. The third Favour of God to *Israel*, that *Samuel* here mentions, is not so much one single Mercy as a Constellation of them; namely, Their many Deliverances, after their settlement in *Canaan*, from their Enemies round about them, that envied their Peace, that were jealous of their Happiness, and that laboured, and contrived, and combined together, either to re-  
duce

duce them to their old Slavery again, or totally to ruine and root them out : But as often as they rose up against them, so often did their good God appear on their behalf, and by strange and miraculous means sheltered this people from their Malice, and continued their Church, and preserved their State, in spite of all attempts to the contrary.

And these are the *Righteous Acts* of the Lord, upon which this holy and good man is going to reason with them. This is the Foundation, upon which he builds the strength of his ensuing Discourse. That considering these great Vouchsafements of God, how obliged they were to fear him, and cleave unto him with their whole Hearts : And, Of what an high nature would their Transgressions be, after all this kindness ; and, What shame, what sorrow, what repentance would suffice to ballance their ingratitude.

And this is the method of *Samuel's* arguing with the *Jews*, from the Mercies of God to them ; and, no doubt, it made a very notable impression upon their Hearts : An excellent Platform and Direction this is for us to follow in our Exhortations, and when we call upon Men to consider their waies, and to amend them ; We can-

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not take a better course, more probable to have a good effect, than this, which the Prophet *Samuel* here useth; that is, To set before Men the gracious dealings of God to them and their Fathers, what Comforts and Refreshments he hath bestowed on them; what Deliverances and Salvations he hath wrought for them; what visible and remarkable Tokens and Footsteps of his Grace and Goodness they have seen and felt; and then hereupon to argue and expostulate with them.

And seeing, my Christian Brethren, we of this Nation, with the *Jews*, have received great and eminent Mercies at the hand of God, and with the *Jews* also, our carriage and behaviour towards him hath been no waies correspondent, I shall therefore at this time follow the same course and method that *Samuel* here does; and for this purpose, give me leave in the first place to bespeak you in *Samuel's* very words. Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord, of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to YOU and YOUR Fathers. And here I shall set before you the Mercies of God to you and your Fathers, and then reason with you in the presence of the Lord concerning them.

And now I shall begin to reason with you in the presence of the Lord concerning them. I.

## I.

Let me recollect the Righteous Acts, or the Mercies, of the Lord. As for private and personal Mercies, I shall not at all insist upon them, but limit my Discourse only to those that are publick and national, such as have happened to us as a Nation; for such are the *Righteous Acts* meant in the Text. And here let us reflect a little upon what God hath done for us of this Nation. And upon search and examination we shall soon find, That his Goodness hath been marvellous and abundant towards us. Certainly, whatsoever great things other Kingdoms may boast of, as received from the hand of God, we of this Kingdom have had our share. And truly, I think, if a man should go all the World over, and take an account of every People and Language, this Island of our Nativity would be found to be the Happiest. And tho' doubtless all others have reason to be sensible of the Goodness of God to them in many respects, yet we of this Nation have far greater reason. We have swam in a greater Sea of Mercies, and our Cup hath more overflowed: God hath given more notable and famous marks of his Favour to us *English-men*.

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It will be convenient to mention some of them, because particulars do more affect; and as *Samuel* in this Chapter insisted chiefly upon three sorts of Mercies vouchsafed to *Israel*; so by way of Parallel, I will at this time reduce the Mercies of God to our Nation, under three Heads.

I. The Deliverance of our Fore-fathers from the Spiritual *Egypt*, viz. The Bondage of Popery.

II. The placing us in a good Land, a second Land of *Canaan*.

III. The Protections that God hath given us, from our Enemies round about us, that combined together against us, like the *Canaanites* and the *Perizzites*, and the rest of the seven Nations, against *Israel*.

I. I begin with the Deliverance of our Fore-fathers from the Tyranny of *Rome*, and the bondage of the *Popish Religion*. A Yoke, which our Fathers, both Kings and People, many a year, had grievously laboured under; when a foreign Bishop had usurped Authority over our Estates and



and Liberties, our Souls and Consciences, in that sort, as tho' we had all been made only to serve the ends of his Ambition and Covetousness; and which was saddest of all, our immortal Souls were in imminent hazard, by reason of the wretched Ignorance, Superstition, and false Worship Men were then nursell'd up in.

But the good G O D in due time looked down upon us; pittied our Bondage, and brought us up out of this *Egypt*, moving and emboldening the Hearts of our Governours to vindicate themselves from the Usurpations of *Rome*, and to dismiss Superstition and Idolatry from among us, and to set on foot a blessed Reformation from those notorious Abuses and Corruptions, in which our poor Church had been so long wrapt up before. The Scriptures, that shew unto us the Way of Salvation, lockt up before, were now opened: Our Prayers, that were hidden in an unknown Tongue before, made intelligible: Worshipping of Saints, and making Addresses to Wood and Stone, abrogated: The Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, polluted by a Mass of Fooleries, and Corruptions, and Errors, restored to its Primitive use and practice; and a reasonable Service celebrated;

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celebrated, and Preachers appointed to teach and instruct men, concerning the Contents of our Holy Religion ; and Means of Saving-knowledg more and more brake in upon us. And thus we were then delivered.

And this Mercy of God will appear to be the greater, if we consider what a small part of *Christendome*, in comparison, enjoy it beside our selves. God seemed to have picked us out from the rest of the World, to manifest This his Kindness to ; for the greater part of Christians still sit in Darknes, concerning CHRIST and his Religion ; and while their Priests pretend to keep knowledge, they communicate little enough to them ; they tell them, it is enough for them to believe as the Church believes, That they must resolve their Faith into the Authority of the Church : But what the Faith of the Church is, they need not trouble themselves to know, let them but hear Mass and mumble over their Rosaries and their Latin Prayers ; let them but kiss a Crucifix, and kneel before a Saints Image, and sprinkle themselves with Holy Water, and arm themselves with the sign of the Crots, and 'tis enough.

This, I say, is the condition of most Christians ; but God hath dealt more bountifully with  
beside us you,

you my Brethren ; He hath given you means of more perfect knowledge of JESUS CHRIST, and of the way and means of Salvation by him.

In a word, We have our Christian Religion, that had been defac'd, blotted, and blurred by Popish Superstition, cleansed from its Corruptions, and restored to us as it was in the Primitive Ages ; a most invaluable Mercy and Blessing ! so that nothing now remains for us to do, but to live according to the knowledge and means of Grace which we have. And this is one Rank of Divine Favours vouchsafed us of this Nation, viz. Our deliverance from the Bondage and Tyranny of Rome, answerable to that of the Jews from Egypt.

Another singular Mercy of God to this Nation, parallel to that God vouchsafed the Jews, is the good Land, wherein God hath planted us. As the former concerned our spiritual Good, so this our Temporal ; indeed a blessed Country ours is, a true Canaan, a Land flowing with Milk and Honey. The British Islands were antiently and truly reckoned one of the best and happiest Soyles in the World.

And here I might insist upon the Fruitfulness of the Land; the Plenty of all things for the Life and uses of Men; the Temperature and Wholsomness of the Clime; the Health and long Age of the Inhabitants; the Manners and Dispositions of the People, who are naturally Loyal and True, Sober and Manly, Courageous and Valliant: For so the ancient Inhabitants were reputed to be; and if they are not all so now, 'tis owing to their Sins, whereby many of us have marred and emasculated our Natures.

Moreover, I might insist upon the happy Situation of this Island, walled about with Seas, to defend us from Foreign Invasion, that ambitious Princes may not so easily make Inroads upon us, and bring in their destructive Armies; God hath placed us in a World by our selves, and we were therefore sometimes called, *Alter Orbis, The other World.*

Under the consideration of the Happiness of our Country, I might likewise entertain you with a Discourse of our moderate and easie Government, and wholesome Laws: Our Kings rule by Law, and are not arbitrary; our Laws are framed and modelled by our own Representatives; and so, in effect, we are under Laws  
of

of our own making. And among the rest of the Priviledges of the *English Nation*, this must not be forgotten, at this time especially, That for the saving us both the Labour and Expences of long Journies up to *Westminster-Hall*, the Reverend the Judges leave their Seats there for our Ease and Convenience; and are sent down among us, twice a Year, in these their Circuits, to hear and determine our Grievances, and to do us Right, and to take Vengeance on Malefactors, the common Mischieves of a Country. And thus Justice is brought home, as it were, to our own Doors.

In all which Respects, many wise Men; not only our Country-men, who may be thought to speak partially; but Foreigners, have held the *English Government*. To be one of the best constituted Governments in the World.

These things I can now but mention; but these, well thought on, will enhance the Value of this second Rank of Mercies, referring to the Country, wherein God hath placed us, inasmuch that we may truly use the Words of the Psalmist, *The lines are fallen to us in a pleasant place; and we have a goodly Heritage.*



III. There is another Mercy still behind; wherein God hath resembled us to his own People the *Jews*; and that is, The Protection of our Church and our Land from the Malicious and Unwearied Attempts of our Enemies, Miraculous have been the Deliverances that God hath wrought for us, from Foreign Invasion and Domestick Conspiracy.

I need but mention the *Invincible Armada*, in the Year 88. when the Pope and the King of Spain, and the Princes of Italy, marshalled up all their Strength and Wealth, and set forth the greatest Fleet that ever the Sea bore, with an intent to invade our Land, to massacre our Persons, and to reduce us to the old *Egyptian Bondage* again: But here the Winds and the Seas were on our side, and fought for us; and then God shewed strength with his own army, and scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

I can but name that prodigious and unheard of Plot of Gun-Powder, that should have made but one stroke of the three Estates; and cut them off at one blow; whereby both our Civil Government and our Protestant Religion should have been dispatched at once: But this, God, by a strange Discovery, disappointed also.

And

And when, of later times, we were embroiled in lamentable Civil Wars, and the Lord's anointed, our Natural Sovereign, slain by wicked Hands, and our antient Government subverted; in due time did the good God take pity upon the sad Estate of these Kingdoms, and brought back our Natural Prince, and restored our Counsellors, as at the beginning, and gave us our old Government again in Church and State: And thus God delivered us then also.

But there are later Deliverances than any of these, fresh in our Memories; wherein our merciful God hath aggrandized his Mercy, and magnified his Goodness to us; namely, in the two last Kings Reigns, when so many Plots and mischievous Projects were hatching and secretly carrying on against us; and of late more openly and avowedly, by our implacable Enemies of Rome, to enslave our free-born Persons, to overthrow our antient Government; and, which was worst of all, to extirpate our excellent Protestant Religion; having also the countenance of Authority on their side; and a powerful standing Army to back them: And they thought, and so indeed did we all, That their Work was as good as done; nor had we the

the least Crivise of Hope, but began to prepare for Suffering, and to submit our Necks, as patiently as we could, to that heavy Yoke, which neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear. But, behold! in this very juncture, *quædam junctura*, did God, beyond our hopes, or very thoughts, raise up another Cyrus to his People, who by a train of Miraculous and Strange Successes, which we ought piously to attribute to the special Influence of Heaven, recover and restore this despairing Nation to its Property, Liberty, Peace, Religion, and every thing else that was dear and precious unto us; and we have a very fair Prospect, if our Sins and Follies do not prevent, of much future Tranquillity.

And truly, to add this to the rest, It is a Mercy of God, not to be forgotten, that notwithstanding the Jesuites, and Emisseries of Rome, have all along from Generation to Generation, from one King's Reign to another, been so busie to overturn us, though they bring up Youth in Foreign Schools, flattered on purpose to plot Treasons, and compass the Ruine of our Kings and Kingdoms, they have never yet these hundred Years and upwards, been able to effect their cursed Designs; And what is all this

this to be attributed to, but the special Providence of God over us? God still blasts them, disappoints them, discovers them, countermines them, makes them false to one another; and we have, blessed be God, a Protestant King, and a Protestant Religion still; such, such have been the miraculous Appearances of God for this Church and Nation.

*O nimium dilecta Deo*  
 O thou Nation of England, beloved of God, too much, beyond thy Deserts.

And thus I have set before you the Mercies of God, his righteous Acts towards us and our Fathers: Thus Good, thus Gracious hath he been, so happy hath he rendred us, so often hath he delivered us, so tender hath he been of us, as if he had adopted us for his second Israel; he hath dealt with us, indeed, as his Children, as his Friends, as his Beloved: How abundant, O Lord, is thy goodness to the Sons of Men; the memorial of thine abundant goodness shall be shewed, and men shall sing of thy greatness: One generation shall praise thy works unto another, and declare thy power.

And

And thus I have finished the first Stage of my Discourse, and that was, To recollect unto you Thoughts the Righteous Acts of the Lord.

And now I come to reason with you here-upon, What shall we say to these things? But that my Reasoning with you may be the more effectual, and make the more deep and lasting Impression, I should discourse, if I had Time, from these three Heads.

I. To consider what such gracious Dealings of God, do in all Justice and Equity call for.

II. What our behaviour hath been.

III. To expostulate and reason with you upon the whole Matter.

I. To consider what such gracious Dealings of God do in all Justice require of us; for natural Reason will dictate to us, That there doth arise an Obligation upon us from Favours received, so that in Point of Equity certain Duties are owing to our Friend, or our Deliverer,



verely; for he that hath contributed toward the  
 Comfort of our Life; but above all, when the  
 great God of Heaven and Earth, who is infi-  
 nitely above us, takes Care of us, and in  
 some waies or other notably beneficial to us.  
 What is Man now to do? certainly his Heart  
 ought to be lift up in Thankfulness to the great  
 Benefactor: His Mind ought alwaies to bear  
 the Characters of the Divine Goodness en-  
 graven upon it, as it were with the Pen of a  
 Diamond. And this Sense of Divine Favour  
 ought to express itself by demeaning our  
 selves loyally towards that God, from whose  
 Hands these Favours have fallen; by loving  
 him, fearing him, obeying his Commands,  
 and complying with his blessed Will,  
 and by devoting and submitting our selves  
 intirely unto him. But, now upon belcom-  
 -bA ni need evad it is agitated all our  
 our Underings: if we have been in Ad-  
 no. Let us see what our Behaviour hath  
 been: We have been such as have participated  
 in a large manner of the Bounty of Heaven;  
 as I have shewn you already; the Paths of  
 God have been all Mercy and Erudition to us,  
 and to our Fathers before us. But now, to  
 come nearer to you; What have you done  
 for God? Where has your Gratitude, your  
 Loyalty

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Loyalty been to him? Have God's Mercies made us any whit the better? Nay are we not the worse? Have we not kicked against him, when he hath fed us to the full? Have not the Lives of many of us been such, as if they were led on purpose to confront him? As if we were resolved to offend him? As if we cared not for his Favour? How often have we sinned against God, when with the same Ease we might not have sinned, or have done somewhat that might have pleased him? How frothy and unchristian have our Words and Discourses been? How unjust and unrighteous, and uneven our Dealings? If we have been in Prosperity, how forgetful have we been of him? How insolently have we carried our selves? How have we trampled upon our Inferiours, and oppressed our Underlings? If we have been in Adversity, how unadvisedly have we spoken with our Tongues into what Indecencies hath our Passion or Anger, or Sorrow driven us. But particularly, what little Correspondence have we borne towards that infinite Mercy of restoring the true Religion to us? We pretend, indeed, to value and love our

our Religion. We speak much of our Happiness in professing it; We shew great Dislike and Abhorrence of Rome and her Practices; but alas! our Lives bear no Proportion to our Words and Professions.

And here I may take up the Complaint that an English Protestant Writer, in the very beginning of the Reformation, and of Fame in those Times, made in reference to this Matter: "What a Swarm of gross Goss-pellers have we among us? who can practice of the Gospel very finely, talk much of the Justification of Faith, crack very freely of the free remission of all their Sins by Christ's Blood, advance themselves to be of the number of those, which are predestinate unto everlasting Glory: But how far doth their Life differ from all true Christianity: they are puffed up with all kind of Pride, they swell with all kind of Envy, Hatred, Malice & Enmity against their Neighbour; they burne with unquenchable Lusts of Carnal Concupiscence; they wallow and tumble in all kind of beastly Pleasure; their greedy covetous Affections are unsatiabie; the enlarging of their Lordships; the encreasing of their Substance;

*The Deacon in his Preface to his Jewel of Joy.*

"the scraping together of worldly Possessions,  
"and knoweth no End; In fine,  
"all their Endeavours tend unto this End,  
"to shew themselves very Ethnickes, and  
"utterly estranged from God in their Conver-  
"sations, although in Words they otherwise  
"pretend; all their Religion consists in  
"Words and Disputes, in Christian Actions  
"and good Deeds, nothing at all. And so  
"he goes on to shew a third W<sup>h</sup> : *serm*

This then you see hath been a Charge;  
"that hath stuck on the Protestants from the  
"very first Times of our Reformation, in the  
"Reign of Edward VI. and I am afraid these Com-  
"plaints may more truly be spoken up against  
"them in these degenerate, backsliding Daies  
"of ours; I appeal to your selves for the Truth  
"of these things. This good hath God been to  
"us, and thus forward and disingenuous have we  
"been to him.

III. And now, in the third Place, let me  
"expostulate and reason with you upon the  
"whole matter: Is it possible, that the goodness  
"of God hath had no better Success upon us?  
"Have we thus requited the Lord, you foolish  
"People and unwise? What strange Stupidity  
"possesseth



possesseth us, that we carry our selves so un-  
 towardsly toward the best Friend we have in  
 all the World? Was ever more dissingenuity  
 or folly known? Dissingenuity, to affront so  
 good a God, to be so base there where we  
 have been so kindly dealt with; and Folly too,  
 in exposing our selves to the Effects of that  
 Fury, that is begotten of Kindness abused.

Let us at last be persuaded to leave these  
 Courses. Oh! be not so weak, to suffer  
 for vile a thing as Sin to impose upon thee?  
 What? Shall I dishonour my God? Shall I  
 displease him? Shall I be guilty of so gross  
 Ingratitude to my dearest Benefactor? And  
 all this only to gratifie a Lust? Shall I sooner  
 listen to a Passion, to a Folly, than to my  
 God? Hath Sin deserved better of me, than  
 God hath? Oh! far be it from me. And  
 certainly this Exposition will take hold of  
 all Men, that have any Spark of Ingenuity  
 in them. For these things, that I am now dis-  
 coursing, touch upon the tenderest part of the  
 Soul, and make a very close Address unto the  
 ingenious Part of it.

I shall propound one or two good Com-  
 ments to you, with reference to the present Dis-  
 course, and so make an end.

I. In



I. In reference to the Mercies of God in general, endeavour to bear and keep up a quick Sense of them alwaies upon your Minds: Oh! bear about with you these Marks of Divine Love and Favour: The Remembrance of them will be of excellent Use for the checking us in our Careers of Sin, and the forwarding us in the Course of Piety; for a Man can scarcely think of God's Goodness to him, and at the same time play the Villain and the Rebel against him. But on the contrary, God's Mercies will enkindle a Love of God in our Hearts; and if we love him, we shall obey him, and do and suffer any thing for his sake. And therefore, I say, let not the goodness of God depart out of your Minds, but frequently call upon your Souls, as David did upon his, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name: Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits,*

*Psal. 103.*  
2, 3.

II. and lastly, as to the Mercy of the Protestant Religion in particular, the Counsel I would give you in relation to this is, that we walk answerably unto it; and that our behaviour

behaviour be such, as may become it. And there are two things that are great Ornaments unto it, and that will set a mighty Lustre upon it, and indeed are indispensably required by it: The one is a *Peaceable Spirit*, and the other a *Holy Life*. Peace and Holiness, which are both joyned together in one Verse, *Follow peace with all men, and holiness;* <sup>Heb. 12. 14.</sup> and they are recommended unto us by the most prevalent Argument that can possibly be invented, because without them *no man shall see the Lord*: seeing the Lord in Heaven, in Glory, being made Partakers of the blisful Vision, depends upon the pursuit of Peace and Holiness.

First, *Peace*, That venerable, sacred, inviolable thing: *Peace*, the great primary Law of our Holy Religion; the truest distinguishing Character of a right Christian; the best Prop and Pillar of Christianity. *Quid est Christianismus si Pax absit?* said Erasmus, *What is Christianity it self without Peace?* As though it could not subsist without Peace, that there could scarce be Christianity without it. Nay, it is the Happiness of Heaven: There is nothing there but a sweet union of Spirits, and harmony of Souls; and, in a word, it is the Name

28 Sermon: 2 A SERMON Preached

Heb. 13.  
20.

Name that GOD himself is called by, viz.  
*The God of Peace.*

And therefore this is to be preserved *sartata*  
*recta*, by all the care and means possible.  
And because our difference in Opinion is so  
apt to do violence to this Sacred Badg of  
Christianity, let us take great care, whatsoever  
our Judgments be, that it have not that very  
bad influence upon any of us. And to re-  
medy this, either let us sacrifice our private  
Opinions to Peace, which is of far greater va-  
lue than our Opinions can be; or, if we do  
not that, yet by providing by all possible means  
against disturbances and clamour, and all bit-  
ter zeal: And that we may do, partly by  
concealing our different Judgments, and ha-  
ving our Faith to our selves, as the Apostles  
advise; partly by complying with, and sub-  
mitting to the Customs of the National  
Church, as far as we can possibly, that so  
far as lies in us, we may live peaceably with  
all men; partly by being modest in our Sen-  
timents, not confident or stiff in our own Con-  
cepts, apt to think charitably of those that  
differ from us; not fond of a Party, nor cry-  
ing, *I am for Paul, and I for Apollos*; nor  
cherishing Prejudices against all that are not

Rom. 14.  
22.

of

of our own way. It is a thing of a very bad consequence, and oftentimes falls out to the breach of Christian Peace and Love, that we usually esponse a Side, and then we are partial to our selves, and very critical in espying faults in others, and rigorous in censuring and condemning the Practices of all besides our own Party.

It brings to my mind a Passage, that we read in our Books; of a certain Bishop of *Gilbert. Foliot. God. Catal. of Bishops.* London in King Henry II. his Reign. This man discoursing one day with a Friend of his, concerning this temper, saith he, 'When I first entred into a Monastery, I was wont to blame very much the sluggishness of my Governours: When I became a Prior, I would complain of Abbots: Afterwards arising to the Honour of an Abbot, I favoured my fellow-Abbots, but ceased not to reprehend Bishops: And lastly, When I was a Bishop my self, I began to see how much more easie a thing it is to find Faults than to mend them. By which he did shew, in himself, the temper of most men, how apt they are to favour their own side, and how diligent to accuse their Superiors, and how ready to be angry with all of a different Order, Sect, or Perswasion.

E

swasion. And withal, upon maturity of Years and Judgment, he gave us to see, how unreasonable and childish this is; and therefore, that it is much better to be of a charitable modest Spirit, to cover some defects that we espy in others, and not to think our selves without fault, alwaies remembring, that *There is nothing perfect under the Sun.* And this would prove an excellent means for the composing and pacifying the Minds of Christians to one another, and for the promoting of Peace.

Let us then labour after the things that make for peace: Let us seek peace and ensue it, and approve our selves the true Disciples and genuine Followers of the loving and peaceable Jesus, by being peaceable and peace makers our selves. He was of a peaceable Spirit, and underwent much for Peace sake, and was the great Pacificator between GOD and Man; the infinite Benefits whereof, such as the Pardon of our Sins, and the blessed Hope of everlasting Peace, we Christians feel, to our great and endless Comfort; the consideration of which Blessed things, brought about by our great Peace-maker, should make us Friends, and Sons of Peace.

Secondly,



Secondly, To Peace join *Holiness*; and indeed the one is a proper Door and Entrance into the other: The *peaceable* Christian is the only probable Man to make a truly *holy* Christian. When the Soul is calm, and the storms of Passion and Contention are all lay'd and still; then the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Peace and Love enters. Let not the profession of Christianity serve thy turn, without the Spirit and Life of it. Be very conscientious in all the great and divine Laws of it, Mortification and Self-denial, Justice and Temperance, Humility and Patience, Meekness and Charity, Love and Good-will, subduing our Humours, and bridling our Passions, and bringing our Spirits under Discipline, and framing our Minds more and more to a relish and delight in holy Exercises, to a love of God, to a contempt of the World, to an ardent desire to be admitted into that Cœlestial State above.

This is the true divine Life and Spirit, that becomes all the Professors of the Gospel, that should be their chief End, and their great and earnest Care, as they would walk worthy of that holy Name, whereby they are called. And when all is done, after all our talk and

dispute; after all our heats and contests;  
after all our Books and Writings, there is no  
thing so effectual to make God our Friend;  
nothing so much adorns our Excellent Pro-  
fane Religion, and better secures it to us and  
our Posterity: In a word, nothing treasures up  
so much solid Peace and holy Assurance unto  
our Souls, as the sincere honest application of  
our selves to the Practicals of RELIGION.

**F I N I S.**

**ERRATUM**

Page 73. In the Margin, read *That* *shall*

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